

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

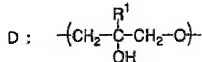
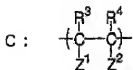
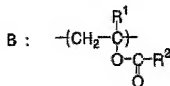
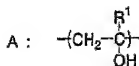
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): An ink-jet recording ink, comprising a pigment and a compound represented by the following General formula (I):



wherein in General formula (I), R represents a hydrophobic group, or a group derived from a hydrophobic polymer; X represents a bivalent linking group having a hetero bond; n is an integer from 10 to 3500; and structural units of repeated Y comprise at least one structural unit represented by A, C or D, and further comprise 0 to 40% by mole of structural units represented by B:



wherein in structural units A through D, R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms; R² represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms; R³ represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; R⁴ represents a hydrogen

atom, $-\text{CH}_3$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{COOH}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, or $-\text{CN}$; Z^1 represents a hydrogen atom, $-\text{COOH}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, or $-\text{CONH}_2$; and Z^2 represents $-\text{COOH}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, $-\text{SO}_3\text{H}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, $-\text{OSO}_3\text{H}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, $-\text{CH}_2\text{SO}_3\text{H}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, $-\text{CONHC}(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{CH}_2\text{SO}_3\text{H}$ or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, or $-\text{CONHCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{N}^+(\text{CH}_3)_3\text{Cl}^-$.

2. (original): An Ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophobic group represented by R in General formula (I) is an aliphatic group or an aromatic group.

3. (original): An Ink-jet recording ink according to claim 2, wherein the hydrophobic group represented by R in General formula (I) is an alicyclic group.

4. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 2, wherein the hydrophobic group represented by R in General formula (I) is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, phenyl and naphthyl groups.

5. (original): An Ink-jet recording ink according to claim 4, wherein the hydrophobic group represented by R in General formula (I) is an alkyl group having 3 to 70 carbon atoms.

6. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein R in General formula (I) is a group derived from at least one hydrophobic polymer selected from the group consisting of polystyrene, polymethacrylic acid ester, polyacrylic acid ester, polyvinyl chloride, and derivatives thereof.

7. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 5, wherein a polymerization degree of R in the General formula (I) is from 2 to 500.

8. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein the hetero bond in X in the General formula (I) is selected from the group consisting of an ether bond, an ester bond, a thioether bond, a thioester bond, a sulfonyl bond, an amide bond, an imide bond, a sulfonamide bond, a urethane bond, a urea bond, and a thiourea bond.

9. (currently amended): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein Y comprises a structural unit represented by A, and the structural unit A is a structural unit derived from vinyl alcohol, α -methylvinyl alcohol, or α -propylvinyl alcohol.

10. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein the structural unit B is a structural unit derived from vinyl acetate, vinyl formate, vinyl propionate, or an α -substitution product thereof.

11. (currently amended): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein Y comprises a structural unit C, and the structural unit C is a structural unit derived from acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, maleic acid, an ammonium salt thereof or a metal salt thereof.

12. (currently amended): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein Y comprises a structural unit D, and the structural unit D is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}(\text{OH})\text{CH}_2\text{O}-$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)(\text{OH})\text{CH}_2\text{O}-$, and $-\text{CH}_2\text{C}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_5)(\text{OH})\text{CH}_2\text{O}-$.

13. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein a mass ratio of R to $(Y)_n$ in General formula (I) is from 0.01 to 2, the mass ratio being calculated using atomic weights of respective atoms in R and $(Y)_n$.

14. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, wherein $(Y)_n$ in General formula (I) comprises, as a structural unit thereof, ethylene, propylene, isobutene, acrylonitrile, acrylamide, methacrylamide, N-vinylpyrrolidone, vinyl chloride or vinyl fluoride.

15. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, further comprising water.

16. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, further comprising an water-soluble organic solvent.

17. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, further comprising a dispersing agent.

18. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, further comprising a drying inhibitor.

19. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, further comprising a penetration promoter.

20. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, further comprising a high-boiling water-soluble solvent and a surface tension adjuster.

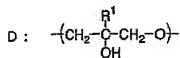
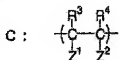
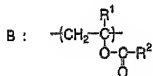
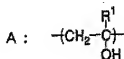
21. (original): An ink-jet recording ink according to claim 1, which has a surface tension of 20 to 60 mN/m.

22. (original): An Image forming method, using an ink-jet recording ink comprising a pigment and a compound represented by the following General formula (I) to form an image:



wherein in General formula (I), R represents a hydrophobic group, or a group derived from a hydrophobic polymer; X represents a bivalent linking group having a hetero bond; n is an integer from 10 to 3500; and structural units of repeated Y comprise at least one structural

unit represented by A, C or D, and further comprise 0 to 40% by mole of structural units represented by B:



wherein in structural units A through D, R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms; R² represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms; R³ represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; R⁴ represents a hydrogen atom, -CH₃, -CH₂COOH or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, or -CN; Z¹ represents a hydrogen atom, -COOH or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, or -CONH₂; and Z² represents -COOH or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, -SO₃H or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, -OSO₃H or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, -CH₂SO₃H or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, -CONHC(CH₃)₂CH₂SO₃H or an ammonium salt thereof or alkali metal salt thereof, or -CONHCH₂CH₂CH₂N⁺(CH₃)₃Cl⁻.

23. (original): An image forming method according to claim 22, wherein the hydrophobic group represented by R in General formula (I) is an aliphatic group or an aromatic group.